

January 10, 2014

Weekly Views

Indiana Governor Michael R. Pence recognized long-term state employees for their many years of dedicated service during a ceremony in the Statehouse. Among the many honorees, the Indiana Department of Correction had 27 retired and current employees recognized for 40 and 35 years of service. (photo below)



The newly established Mental Health Unit at the Pendleton Correctional Facility became operational with the arrival of its first five offenders. The new unit "INSIGHT" (Intent on Shaping Individual Growth with Holistic Treatment) will eventually consist of five housing units dedicated to providing mental health services and programs in the least restrictive setting as possible without compromising the safety and security of the facility. Once it reaches full capacity, it will house 264 offenders with mental health needs and offender mentors who are tasked with assisting the mental health offenders in their day to day activities as well as programming needs.



Longtime Wabash Valley Correctional Facility Captain/Shift Supervisor Greg Eaton is now keeping watch over the entire physical plant! Greg has advanced to Physical Plant Director. Eaton began his career as a Correctional Officer in 1993 and promoted through the custody ranks to Sergeant, Lieutenant and Captain. Eaton welcomes the challenge of maintaining the facilities 28 buildings, including 12 offender housing units, security fencing, electronic surveillance, roads, vehicles and communication systems. "It's like a small city and I take its upkeep, which is crucial to our safety and security, very seriously," said Eaton. (photo left)

A new program was initiated at the Pendleton Correctional Facility minimum security outside dorm. The "Ownership Spirit" Program is based on a book written by motivational speaker Dennis R. Deaton, the Founder and CEO of Ouama Learning Systems. This program serves to inspire participants to claim full accountability for their lives and ultimately create whatever destiny they choose. Some of the other programs initiated at the outside dorm include Restorative Justice,

Toastmasters, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Houses of Healing and Prison Etiquette.

The Continuing Education Council (CEC) worked in conjunction with the Indiana State Prison (ISP) to present its 18th Annual Kwanzaa Celebration. The program consisted of presentations from the offenders who reside at ISP along with Dr. Renecia Williams, an outside guest who has been a devoted advocate and faithful outside supporter of the Kwanzaa program at the facility. The men were given the opportunity to learn from their peers about African American culture in America and abroad through the use of music, poetry, skits, speeches and other various presentations.

Miami Correctional Facility made it through the blizzard of 2014. The few staff that made it in safely dealt with 16.5 inches of snow and below zero temperatures during the two and a half days of the storm. By Tuesday afternoon, staff and offenders were digging out Phase II of the facility where drifts were more than waist high in some areas. (photo right)



The Indiana Women's Prison (IWP) Wellness Committee ended 2013 with the conclusion of the facility's Biggest Loser competition while looking forward to 2014 and finding out who the winner is. The members mapped out a Wellness Chart taking them well into March 2014, with the Wellness Newsletter and Weekly Wellness Tips being distributed soon. To keep the body in motion, IWP staff received pedometers for Christmas. Staff are eager to engage in a custody bracket competition for who walks the most steps in a month. The committee has also planned Beach Volleyball and the Polar Bear Plunge at Eagle Creek in March. Wow, what a way to get the year moving!

Westville Correctional Facility Superintendent Mark Levenhagen has announced the promotion of Jason Smiley to Correctional Captain. Captain Smiley started his new post during the recent winter storm, working a 26 hour shift with a skeleton roster, two feet of snow and below zero temperatures. Despite the emergency situation, the facility remained in good hands under Captain Smiley's leadership, remarked Superintendent Levenhagen. Captain Smiley has been with the facility since 1999 and has been a member of the E-Squad and K-9 Units.

Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility received notification that 24 students earned their GED. Chris Stilwell, Supervisor of Education, congratulated all the graduates and praised staff for helping those students in this achievement. A graduation ceremony for the students will be conducted to celebrate their accomplishment.

Madison Correctional Facility sponsored 19 children through the Salvation Army's Angel Tree Program. Each child received undergarments, a pair of pants, a shirt, coat, shoes, and a toy or other age appropriate gift. The offenders also sponsored Christmas dinner for 50 families in the community, a collaborative effort between Kroger and the local Salvation Army.

The Indiana State Prison held a Red Cross Blood Drive, collecting 18 pints of blood with the potential of saving 54 lives.